

IN FOCUS

The Official Publication of the Jamaican Canadian Association

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Dec 2006 Issue

Ole Time Christmas



"What happened to the good ole days when Christmas was Christmas?" many may ask.

Times have certainly changed, and many young people today have no knowledge of what the traditional 'Christmas time' was like in Jamaica many years ago. As the Yuletide season is upon us, let's take a trip down memory lane and relive the experiences of ole time Christmas – Jamaican style.

In those days, the approach of the festive season was signaled, as it still is, by the cool Christmas breeze and the blooming poinsettia. Soon after, the customary 'fixing up' of house began. Special trees and large stones that lined driveways or walk-

ways were whitewashed (a custom which is still carried on today). Slaked limestone was a common form of paint among the rural folk who used it not only at home, but also around the farm.

In addition, mothers would stay up during the nights, hand stitching new curtains to hang up, in anticipation of Christmas morning. Not to be forgotten is the tremendous sheen of mahogany floors, diligently polished with an extra coat of beeswax.

Food has always been a vital part of Christmas celebrations. Even before homes were beautified, hams were cured, fruits were soaking and ginger wine and Pimento liqueurs were in the making, bottles of sorrel were brewed, after which they were sweetened and laced with rum. Farmers grew anxious, inspecting their crops of gungo peas so that they could be reaped at the right time.

When the three-day holiday arrived, thousands resorted to the market where not only buying and selling took place, but a great deal of merriment. Jonkonnu dancers

and 'Set Girls' paraded the streets, making Christmas Carnival. Jonkonnu, in his grotesque garb, was not loved by the children in the old days. In fact, they used to run at the sight of him. He was accompanied by an actor boy known as 'Koo Koo' who was a jolly and comical figure. These characters were accompanied by a band of stragglers who followed them, providing music. People threw coins at the entertainers as they went down the street.

Set Girls were forerunners of beauty queens. They competed for admiration from the crowds, just to see which set could outdo the other in style of dress. While they paraded, they were often joined by the Jonkonnu dancers and together made carnival in Jamaica at Christmas time.

On Christmas morning, everyone turned out for church – adults dressed in their best and children were pleased with the gifts they had received – dolls, carts, wagons and trinkets. However, the traditional gift of the laboring

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WE WILL REMEMBER

Over the past few weeks the JCA and the community have lost the following members:

Mr. MARTIN BARRETT

Mr. Barrett joined the Association in July of 1997, and was an active member of the Senior's and Domino group. He passed away on the 24th of October.

Ms. THEODORA AGATHA BRISCOE

Theo, as she was known to most of us, became a member of the JCA in January of 1977. Since that time she was a very active member and a great supporter of the goals and objectives of the Association. She played an important role in the building and growth of the JCA over the years. Although she served on different committees, she had a special attachment and great dedication to the Women's Committee. Theo passed away on the 31st of October.

We also expressed our condolences to:

Desmond Jarrett, who lost a sister in Jamaica recently.

Barbara Thomas, as she mourns the loss of another

brother in Jamaica in October.

Carolyn Goulbourne-Warren, who recently lost an aunt in Jamaica.

As we express our condolences to all the families and loved ones we will also cherish the privileges we had in knowing each and every one of them. We are grateful for the memories that we shared and that they have left us.

It is with great sadness we mourn these losses.

May they Rest in Peace
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All Types Of Omlettes

Editorial
CHRISTMAS IN JAMAICA

Reprinted with permission from:

"The Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage"

Published by Twin Guinep by Olive Senior

The celebration of the Christmas season (which goes into the New Year) is taken very seriously by many Jamaicans and has always been the island's most important holiday. The day following Christmas Day (Boxing Day) is also a public holiday and so is New Year's Day.

In modern times the celebrations have become more Europeanized, with strong religious overtones as in other Christian countries. The event is usually marked by church services, Christmas carols, much visiting and exchange of gifts and greetings, family celebrations and special food and drink, as well as partying. Many people mark New Year's Eve by attending midnight mass or church services in addition to private house parties or elaborate public balls that have become a fairly recent feature. Some have taken on the practice of decorating their house or yard with coloured lights and having lavishly decorated Christmas trees.

Despite the many imported elements, there are still some features of Christmas that are unmistakably Jamaican, starting with 'Christmas breeze', a special light and welcome wind that signals the imminent arrival of the favourite time of year. In the countryside, the sugar cane sends up its feathery plume to signal its ripeness and in gardens everywhere, lavish poinsettia, red and white, burst into bloom, as does a wild vine known as Christmas Pop. While today children might expect to

"A promenade down King Street on Christmas Day was once a feature of Kingston"

receive manufactured and imported toys, in the past Christmas was more associated with noisemakers, balloons, coloured paper hats with amusing sayings and special sweets. Firecrackers would be bought and set off from weeks ahead of the holiday (a practice introduced by the Chinese). Firecrackers were, however, banned in the 1970s. A

promenade down King Street on Christmas Day was once a feature of Kingston, along with the tradition of Christmas Market or Grand Market, and a Christmas

Morning concert, now all vanished.

Special foods are associated with Christmas. Ripening in back gardens and making its appearance in the markets to herald the season is sorrel, to be made into the red-coloured drink without which Christmas is unthinkable, as well as gungo peas to be made into soup with the bone left over from the Christmas ham. A sweet yam called yampi, also available at this time, is regarded as a special treat.

In the old days, householders cured their own hams, but now prepared hams are readily available. This is the favourite Christmas meat, though turkey is becoming popular. Earlier in the 20th century, Christmas beef or a specially raised chicken honoured the day.

Among the better off, the meal must be finished off with Christmas pudding sometimes doused in rum and brought flaming to the table in the English manner.

Many people begin to celebrate Christmas well in advance of the actual event, especially since many Jamaicans living overseas try to return home, and the 'season' is not regarded as well and truly over until the second of January.

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Jamaican Christmas

Sorrel

Gungo Peas

Yampi

Cured Hams

Pudding





**Sandra Carnegie-Douglas
JCA President**

"To all members, clients, colleagues, supporters and allies, funders, all; our very Best Wishes for the 2006 Holiday Season"



President's Report – A Message From The President

Greetings to our Members and Readers

It seems unbelievable that the year is almost over and we are once again on the eve of another holiday season. Where did the time go? The hectic pace of this society has entrenched a new norm for how we live our lives individually and organizationally moving from activity to activity; and from event to event – constantly moving, constantly changing.

In fact, we find ourselves, oftentimes, functioning in autopilot mode as this hectic way of life has become so second nature. We, at times, forget or maybe even ignore, the importance and the need to pause, reflect and visualize our way forward.

2006 has certainly been a year of important strides, challenges and changes for the Association as a whole, and for individual members.

We have expanded service and programme delivery to our communities and we have heightened our advocacy and visibility on the issues impacting the communities and constituencies we serve. We have witnessed increased participation and output in many of

our membership activities, such as: the 2006 Independence Gala, our Annual Scholarship Awards, JCA Health Fair Forum, among others. We are continuing on track to enhance our operations and service delivery both to the membership and communities at large.

While we are making strides in various areas of the Association, we also face changes and challenges that are part of the life of any organization. In the past several weeks, we have experienced the loss of loved members and families of members in the Association.

We send our condolences to the families of these individuals and note the contributions that they have made to JCA, the community and the broader Canadian society. In this issue of In Focus we pay special tribute to these individuals.

Congratulations to Kamala-Jean Gopie, a past president of the JCA, who was recently appointed to the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

As 2006 winds down and the New Year approaches, let us use this time of transition to take stock of our situation, organizationally and personally. In 2007, we

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Program Profile - YOW Program Update

President continued from page 4

will celebrate the 45th anniversary of the founding of the Association, which coincides with Jamaica's 45th anniversary of independence! Let us, with purpose, take the time to pause, reflect and visualize on the way forward for the Association for the next 45 years.

Let us, with purpose, do what is necessary to strengthen and advance JCA for the next 45 years to ensure that it remains as a pillar of strength and a reservoir of support and critical resources for communities.

Let us, with purpose, do what is necessary, to ensure that JCA is poised to effectively and competitively operate in our rapidly changing and advancing society. We have an obligation to build on the legacy left by the founders and founding members, as we chart the course for the Association for the next 45 years!

To all members, clients, colleagues, supporters and allies, funders, all – our very best wishes for the 2006 holiday season! May the New Year bring you peace and blessings.

Nuff Respect!

Sandra Carnegie-Douglas

In February 2006, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, (MCYS) announced funding for 39

youth outreach workers to serve 13 priority neighbourhoods across the City of Toronto. The Jamaican Canadian Association was awarded the lead role for the Youth Outreach Worker

Program for North Toronto in May, 2006. Two other agencies (East Metro Youth Services and Yorktown Child and Family Services) were awarded the lead role for the other areas of Toronto, and Youth Justice in Durham Region was awarded the lead for four workers in that area.

The JCA is responsible for the overall implementation, delivery and management of the program and all funds (\$660,000 for year 1) flowing through the program for North Toronto. We are responsible for four communities and 10 workers.

Through a combination of community consultations and requests for proposals, we selected six agencies to hire workers for the four communities. The agencies are: Promoting Economic and Community Health (PEACH), Jane Finch Community & Family Centre and

JCA in the Jane Finch neighbourhood. In Lawrence Heights, the agencies are Black Action Defense Committee (BADC) and Mid-Yanta Community Services. Hincks-Dellcrest looks after Flemingdon Park/Victoria Village, while Westminster/Branson is tended by the Griffin Centre.

The Youth Outreach Worker Program is designed to:

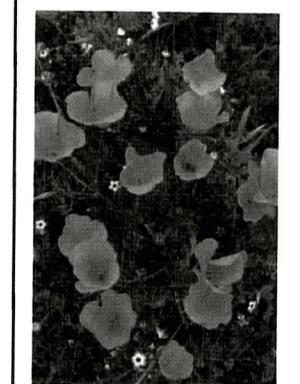
- * Advocate and provide support to youth and their families at the community level
- * Support youth in the development of positive experience in an effort to enhance their decision-making abilities, self-respect, respect for community/country
- * Promote positive development and safe leisure time activities
- * Build community organization capacity to deliver youth-focused services
- * Develop partnership relationship with youth
- * Advocate for youth rights at all levels
- * Connect youth to resources

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**Don't miss the
Annual Children's Christmas Party**

**Dec 10th
At
JCA**



Executive Director's Report

INTERIM-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

I am pleased to present my first update as the Interim Executive Director, appointed by the Board of Directors to lead the Social Service Department of the organization during the transition period. With this role, I welcome both the challenges and hopes as the Association moves forward.

In order to offer more services to the community, we have increased the number of staff and programs. Three new staff have come on board in **Opportunity Plus+ Program** filling the following positions: Program Co-coordinator, Program Assistant and the newly created position of Job Developer. Thanks to increased funding from the United Way, we will be able to meet the increased demands of the **Settlement Adaptation Program** which provides settlement services to newcomers. This has allowed us to hire a part-time staff to assist with the program.

The JCA continues as the lead agency in the North Quadrant for the **Youth Opportunity Fund/Youth Outreach Worker Pro-**

gram. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services provided the funding for this project. New staff has also been engaged to coordinate the **K-Club: (The Transition Program)** and Fundraising consultant has been hired to coordinate the Direct Mail campaign, scheduled to begin early in 2007.

The Social Service Department recently organized a successful "Administrative Week". The public was invited to participate in workshops and a seminar highlighting the activities of the programs to the community.

The demand for services and activities of the Social Services department of the organization continues to grow particularly the programs offered by the CYFS and **Newcomer Settlement Services**. The **Parenting** and **K-Club programs** are being fully utilized. Arrangements are at an advanced stage to have a formal agreement with the **Toronto District School Board** (TDSB) regarding the delivery of the **Leaders in Partnership Program** (LIP) in selected schools in the city.

by Joe Boateng

"The demand for services and activities of the Social Services department of the organization continues to grow"

Consul General's Holiday Message

The Consulate joins with the many Jamaicans in Canada, to mark Christmas 2006. Christmas is a time of celebration, thanksgiving and reflection. It is a time for families to give thanks and love for one another. Sharing love is the gift of Christmas and we express our appreciation for the many opportunities and joys we have had over the year.

We give thanks for the life and contribution of our beloved, the Honourable Louise Bennett-Coverley, who left us in July. We give thanks for the achievements we experienced this year.

Let us recognize and praise those who through their philanthropy and generosity of spirit, have improved the lives of many. The contributions of scholarships, public education programmes and the patronage for the numerous events in support of our community is testimony of our charity.

As we join together with other members of the Caribbean Diaspora in strengthening our cultural heritage and contribution to the Canadian society, we are grateful to the many who have served before us. As we reflect on the future, let us resolve to

be instruments of peace and compassion. To be our brothers' keepers and spread the spirit of goodwill and joy that keeps the Christmas values alive. In humility we give of ourselves and make the difference in our community.

I wish for all Jamaicans and their families and the well-wishers in our Canadian Community a wonderful, peaceful and prosperous Christmas. May the blessings of the Almighty continue to shine on us.

*Anne-Marie Bonner (Ms.)
Consul General
November, 2006*



Ms. Bonner
Jamaica's Consul General to Toronto

"I wish for all Jamaicans and their families and the well-wishers in our Canadian Community a wonderful, peaceful and prosperous Christmas"

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Christmas in the pre-Emancipation era was celebrated even more intensively, since it represented for the entire population, slave and free, the longest break from labour, vacations being unknown. The three-day holidays beginning on Christmas Day took on a carnival-like atmosphere in the towns and sometimes sugar plantations. The festivals were the occasions for the slaves to dress in all their fine clothes and jewellery, paying visits to the Great House on Boxing Day,

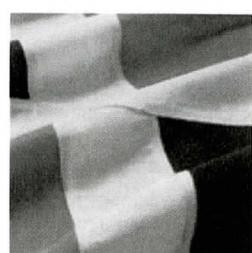
playing masquerade or Jonkonnu. They could look forward to an abundant supply of fresh beef (denied them during the year), and other special rations. New clothing was among the treats eagerly awaited, hence the song: 'Christmas a come me want me lama.'

Check out the newly redesigned JCA web site at www.jcassoc.org

Young Professional Singles Benefit

**28-Jan-2007
6:00 pm**

For partnership and sponsorship opportunities please contact the Youth Affairs Committee at (416) 746-5772 ext. 422 or youthaffairs@jcassoc.org





Cover Story ... continued from page 1

class was new shoes for the season's celebrations.

Following church, the traditional Christmas dinner, usually an early afternoon meal, was served. This special meal often took up the remainder of the day, as it also served as a family gathering in celebration of the season.

In many a home, the table was laden with ham, chicken (that had been fattened for the special event), wee pigs roasted in an oven, known as "Roast Moses", large cuts of roast beef and flour-white yams; plantains cooked in all forms - roasted, boiled and fried. Not

to be forgotten is the Christmas favourite - rice and gungo peas, made with pure coconut milk. The chief 'sweet' at this meal was plum pudding, baked in the 'dutchie' on the coal pot in the backyard, and served with butter sauce.

Those were the good old days when Christmas brought with it love, joy and community spirit. This year let us reflect on the true meaning of the season and strive for the magical spirit of Christmas that once reigned.

by Charlene Campbell
Jamaica Information Service

Holiday Recipes



Sorrel
a Jamaican Tradition

Rum Cake

- 1 Pk. Yellow Cake Mix
- 1 Pk. Vanilla Pudding
- 1/2 Cup Vegetable Oil
- 1/2 Cup Dark Rum (Bacardi)
- 4 Eggs
- Pecans

Mix together all ingredients, except pecans

Grease and flour tin and line with pecans.

Pour cake mix over nuts and bake at 350 degrees for 50-60 minutes

Glaze

- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 lb. butter
- 1/2 cup rum
- 1/4 cup water

Bring all ingredients to a boil. Spoon over cake when baked. Let stand for 20 minutes then enjoy

Submitted by Eunice Graham

SORREL

- 1 lb. sorrel
- 2 - 4 oz. ginger
- 2 quarts water
- Sugar
- White rum
- Wine (optional)
- 8 - 12 pimento grains

** Wash sorrel thoroughly using the fingers to lift it from the water. Put into container, preferably enamel, stainless steel or earthenware.*

** Scrape and wash ginger, then grate or beat. Add to the sorrel. Add pimento grains.*

** Bring water to a boil and pour over the sorrel. Allow to stand 4 - 6 hours. Strain.*

** Sweeten to taste and add rum to taste. * Add wine if desired.*

** Serve over cracked ice.*

Printed with permission from "Our Culinary Heritage" by Jamaica Information Service (JIS)

Community Organization Profile

INTRODUCING THE JAMAICAN DIASPORA - CANADA FOUNDATION

Philip Mascoll, President, JD-CF

The Jamaican Diaspora-Canada Foundation (JD-CF) is an organization through which some 400,000 Jamaicans and their descendants living in Canada will be able to help better our native land, Jamaica, and Jamaicans globally. This Diaspora is open to all Jamaicans regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, class or creed. It fully follows Jamaica's national motto "Out of Many, One People."

The JD-CF was founded as a result of the first ever Jamaican Diaspora Conference held in Kingston, Jamaica, on June 16 and 17, 2004. The conference was the brainchild of the Jamaican Government in partnership with corporate sponsors.

VISION

The JD-CF's primary vision is to improve the standard of living of our families, friends and fellow Jamaicans who live or intend to live in Jamaica, by encouraging and facilitating projects, businesses, visitors and investors from among the Jamaican community in Canada.

MANDATE

The mandate of the JD-CF is: "To cause Jamaicans living in Canada to come together for the purpose of enhancing Jamaica in the areas of national security, business, education and social development; and through continuing liaison with the Jamaican Diaspora in other nations, to impact positively the interests of Jamaica and Jamaicans everywhere".

PRINCIPAL AIMS

To unleash the full potential, intellect and

financial ability of Jamaican nationals, especially those living in Canada, and channel them toward large scale, life quality improvement projects, primarily aimed at Jamaica

To protect the interests of Jamaican nationals overseas

To encourage their participation in the ongoing process of national development, and encourage their individual development as well

The JD-CF was not created to usurp or replace long established individuals or special interest groups, who have been working successfully for the betterment of Jamaicans in Canada for many years.

BENEFIT TO JAMAICANS IN CANADA

Jamaicans living in Canada will now be able to speak directly to the Jamaican government through our two members on the Jamaican Diaspora Advisory Board.

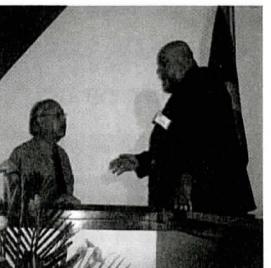
JD-CF MEMBERSHIP

All Jamaicans, Jamaican organizations and businesses in Canada are by definition, members of the JD-CF and have a right to access this organization. However, voting on any business of the JD-CF, participation in the elections of JD-CF board members and access to considerable membership benefits will be confined to those with paid membership status.

Jamaican Diaspora - Canada Foundation,
303 Eglinton Ave. E., Toronto, ON,
M4P 1L3



Ron Cunningham meets His Excellency, Mr. Claudio Valle, Canada's former High Commissioner to Jamaica and Mrs. Valle



Mr. Philip Mascoll, re-elected President of the JD-CF

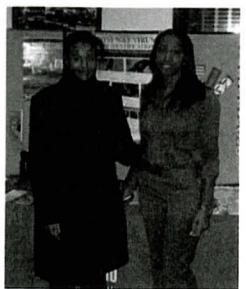


Guests at the Jamaica Diaspora Conference in Kingston, Jamaica



The Most Hon. Prime Minister Portia Simpson-Miller speaks to delegates

Images courtesy of
Kingsley Gilliam
used with permission



"when it comes to HIV, an ounce of prevention is worth more than all the medicine in the world"



Exhibitors of the 2006 JCA Health Fair, held at the JCA Centre

Women's Corner

At a health fair presented by the JCA on October 14, 2006, Mrs. Vivia McCalla, RN, BA, Casey House Hospice, made a presentation on HIV/AIDS. Repeated below, for your information, is part of that presentation.

Am I at risk?

HIV is transmitted most commonly by having unprotected sex; sharing needles; from mother to child before or during birth; and receiving infected blood or blood clotting factors. Since 1985 all donated blood in Canada and many other countries is tested for HIV.

The HIV virus lives in body fluids of the infected person. Body fluids that contain HIV are blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk. In the absence of blood in the mouth, kissing can be classified as no risk. Saliva that does not contain blood presents no potential for transmission.

What are HIV and AIDS?

HIV stands for the Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It is an infection which affects the T-cells, that part of your immune system which attacks diseased cells in your body. After a person becomes infected with HIV, their immune system's ability weakens over time.

AIDS or Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome develops when your body's natural defense system can no longer protect you from certain infections, diseases or cancers which are routinely kept under control by a healthy immune system.

Younger women, these fragile cervical cells are even more exposed than in adult women, which is probably a major reason adolescent girls have a higher risk of being infected.

Abstaining from sexual intercourse is an effective method of protection. Male and female condoms made of latex or polyurethane are effective in preventing transmission. Anyone dealing with body fluids should wash their hands thoroughly after contact. In some cases, wearing gowns, gloves, masks and goggles may be recommended as they are a more effective protection for preventing highly infectious diseases. Needles and other sharp objects must be disposed of in special containers.

HIV/AIDS is changing

There is no cure for HIV/AIDS. Once you are infected, you are infected for the rest of your life. Although treatment does help many people live longer, it does not work equally well for all. In addition, the side effect from the medication given to suppress the virus can be unpleasant. Long-term use of these medications (called anti-retrovirals)

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by JCA Women's Committee

Membership Outreach

NORTH STREET UNITED CHURCH: AN OASIS IN WEST KINGSTON DESTROYED BY FIRE FEBRUARY 7, 2006

We were watching the local news on the morning of February 7, 2006, while holidaying in Montego Bay Jamaica, when the sad news of the destruction of the North Street United Church by fire was announced. This church, built in 1837 by the Rev. John Wooldridge with aid from the London Missionary Society, had a long history of positive community service.

As described by Fay Conville, this church was an oasis in the heart of one of the most depressed areas of Kingston. Why is it so important to assist in the restoration of this Church?

Women's continued from page 10

often causes other medical problems such as liver failure or heart disease.

HIV/AIDS care has become increasingly complex and anti-retrovirals can be very expensive, which is why that old proverb needs an update: "when it comes to HIV, an ounce of prevention is worth more than all the medicine in the world..."

by JCA Women's Committee

The Rev. Nigel Pusey, the current minister had this to say:

"We presently have a Primary School of over 250 students, a Skills Training Centre which trains the people so they can find employment and stay away from crime and drugs. A bakery, which trains the young people in a saleable skill and a Daycare Centre, which allows single female parent families to become breadwinners".

One of the great losses of this church is its original pipe organ. It was one of only two of its kind in the Caribbean.

So what is the purpose of this missive? Plain and simple, having visited the burnt out ruin of the Church, and having seen the effort of the faithful trying to resurrect

Stats for Toronto

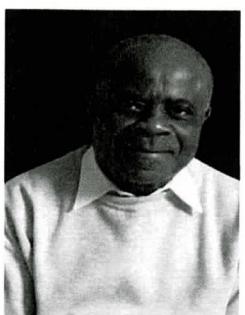
* 15,671 people have tested positive for HIV since 1985
 * 811 Torontonians were diagnosed in 2002
 * Women accounted for 25% of adult positive HIV test in 2002 and 10% since 1985
 * Men account for 90% of all positive tests, of those MSM account for 80%

Stats for the Caribbean

Country	All People	Rate	Deaths/2005
Bahamas	6,800	3.3	<500
Barbados	2,700	1.3	<500
Cuba	4,800	0.1	<500
Dominican Republic	66,000	1.1	6,700
Haiti	190,000	3.8	16,000
Jamaica	25,000	2.6	1,300
Trinidad & Tobago	27,000	2.6	1,900
Total	330,000	2.6	27,000



"this church was an oasis in the heart of one of the most depressed areas of Kingston."



Anton Squire
Membership Services

Paying your membership fees enables us to continue providing necessary services to you, our members

Membership has its privileges



Membership Services

The Membership Committee has been engaged in numerous activities in the last few months:

THE FLAG RAISING CEREMONY

Our ANNUAL FLAG RAISING CEREMONY on Saturday August 5th at the Toronto City Hall in celebration of Jamaica's 44th year of Independence. This was the first year we held the event on a Saturday and the attendance was very good.

THE INDEPENDENCE GALA

At our Annual Independence Gala on Saturday, August 19th, several members were recognized and honored.

KAMALA-JEAN GOPIE who was given the Lifetime Membership Award. Ms. Gopie was the first female President of the Association, and one of the strongest supporters and contributors to the Association in all aspects over the years.

AUDREY CAMPBELL was given the President's Award. Ms. Campbell joined the JCA in August of 2004 and has been very active and dedicated since then. She is a member of the Membership Committee and Fundraising Committee.

BARRY JOHNSON and his wife HERMINE together with RUEL GREY, MARBLET JAMES, NORMA CLARKE and EUGENIA PEARSON received certificates of Special Recognition for 25 years of continuous membership in the JCA.

THE SENIORS BRUNCH

Our Annual Seniors Brunch took place on Sunday, September 17th. The event was well attended with over 200 seniors and youngsters in attendance.

The guest speaker for the afternoon was the Hon. Judy Sgro, MP. A special tribute was paid to Ms. Amy Nelson by the Caribbean Seniors with Mr. Roy Williams

and Ms. Valarie Steele, both former Presidents of the JCA, as keynote speakers.

CONGRATULATIONS

We congratulate the Rev. Dr. PAULETTE CROOKS DRUMMOND on her recent achievements. This grandmother of four graduated in August of 2006, with a Doctor of Philosophy in International Missions/Counseling from California State Christian University (U.S.A).

MEMBERSHIP FEES

To all members, fees are due immediately. Your support is needed to continue providing the necessary services to the Association.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

On behalf of the members of the Membership Services Committee, I wish you and yours a MERRY CHRISTMAS and a very HAPPY, PROSPEROUS and HEALTHY NEW YEAR.

by Anton Squire
Membership Chair



Education Corner

The JCA Saturday Morning Tutorial and Heritage Program

The Jamaican Canadian Association is aware that education is a life long journey of learning and hopes that the very best possible education will lead our children to a world of opportunity and a future filled with academic and professional success. The organization is therefore committed to delivering programs that promote and sustain the academic achievements of Caribbean and African children. The Saturday Morning Tutorial and Heritage Program (SMTP) is one such program.

The SMTP was established in 1991 and is sponsored by the JCA Education and Cultural Committee. It is a weekly program that runs from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm on Saturdays during the school term for students from Grades 1 – 12, who are in need of additional support to meet their educational standards and goals.

The program focuses on English Language and Mathematics skills and although it is primarily driven by homework assistance, it is supplemented by special workshops and educational field trips. It is also comple-

mented by exposure to various cultural activities as a part of the Cultural Heritage component. The Heritage Project for Fall 2006 will be an interactive activity entitled "Who is Miss Lou" aimed at familiarizing the students with the life and work of Louise Bennett. Parents and other interested persons are welcome to participate in the activities. An educational Field Trip is also planned to York University to provide early exposure to the Grades 6-10 students to an institution of higher learning. Furthermore, in recognition of the important supportive role of the parents, the program includes parent orientation sessions with specially invited guests covering a wide range of topics on the education system. Parents are also kept informed of the various activities through a regular newsletter produced by the Program Coordinator.

The JCA Education Committee is proud of the fact that it has been able to create a supportive environment to facilitate youths in the community in meeting their educational goals. This achievement is made possible through a dedicated and committed group of volunteer tutors, comprising of current and retired teachers

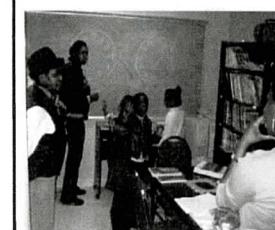
and other professionals of various disciplines who run the program. In order to accommodate the growing demand for the program, additional volunteers are being sought. Volunteering is fun, personally rewarding and provides the opportunity to spend valuable time with young people who can appreciate and benefit from real world experience. Target groups include students seeking degrees in education who can earn practicum experience; current and past educators; Grade 10-12 Students who can serve their 40 hours of community service mentoring younger students; and any other professionals or non-professionals who want to make a difference within the community.

The SMTP is a valuable community program that relies on many groups to be successful including: the students, the tutors, the parents, and the JCA Board, staff and membership. You are all invited to play a part in this initiative.

by:
Sylvanus Thompson
Chair, Education and Cultural Committee &
Kellie Spence
JCA Saturday Morning Tutorial Program Coordinator



Sylvanus Thompson
Education Committee



Students and Facilitators of The Saturday Morning Tutorial Program



Natasha Blake

**acknow-
ledge the
every-day
heroes in
our
community”**

*Happy
Holidays!*

Youth Pulse

Everybody Needs a Hero

In commemoration of National Heritage Week in Jamaica, the Consulate General of Jamaica hosted its inaugural Speaker Series in October. Consul General Anne-Marie Bonner invited Justice Hugh Small as the keynote speaker. The retired judge, with a background in politics and public service, worked extensively throughout the Caribbean and is currently involved in consultation work. In his address, he honored the astounding contributions the national heroes made toward nation building. He noted the determined spirit with which each one possessed to accomplish his/her victories in order to

affect change.

Recognizing these heroes is a great reminder for us to also acknowledge the everyday heroes in our community...mentors. Mentors play a vital role for young people in that they can: inspire, instruct, motivate, guide, counsel, etc. While the role of mentors is not to replace that of parents/guardians, their influence can greatly enhance the development of a young person. By providing support and encouragement based on a relationship of mutual respect and trust, mentors can lead youth to: make positive choices and decisions, constructively resolve problems, promote a positive attitude and build

high self-esteem.

The sad reality is that many young people fall astray by making poor choices. This is due in large part to the lack of mentors in their lives; role models to set a positive example for them to emulate. If you aren't already, be a mentor to someone. Let's equip our young people to discover and pursue their full potential! If you are a young person, seek mentors that can assist you to be the best you can be. Take pride in both our historical and present-day heroes who've left their mark so that you too can make your mark.

By Natasha Blake

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InFocus is published quarterly by the

Jamaican Canadian Association
995 Arrow Road
Toronto, Ontario
M9M 2Z5

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Design and Layout by

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Printing by

Kwik Kopy

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Letters and Submissions welcome. The Editorial Committee reserves the right to edit materials.

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JCA Calendar of Events

Please note: the following event dates were submitted to the PR Committee by the printing deadline

New Year's Eve Gala	Fundraising	December 31, 2006
Young Professional Singles Benefit	Youth	January 28, 2007
Boonoonoonoos Brunch		February 11, 2007
Members Meeting		February 25, 2007